



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Department of Medical Assistance Services

PATRICK W. FINNERTY
DIRECTOR

November 16, 2009

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The Honorable R. Edward Houck, Chairman
The Honorable Phillip A. Hamilton, Vice Chairman
The Joint Commission on Health Care
900 East Main Street
1st Floor West
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Dear Senator Houck and Delegate Hamilton:

The Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) recently completed an extremely broad and thorough analysis of autism services in the Commonwealth. The report, "Assessment of Services for Virginians with Autism Spectrum Disorders", contained several recommendations related to Medicaid and the services offered to individuals with autism spectrum disorders (ASDs). In addition to identifying the need for enhanced, coordinated services, JLARC was concerned that existing services available under Medicaid were not fully utilized due to lack of knowledge as to their availability. As such, JLARC recommended:

Recommendation 4: *The Department of Medical Assistance Services should develop and implement a plan for educating Virginians with autism spectrum disorders (ASDs) and their families; Medicaid case managers; providers; and personnel from relevant programs including School Part B, Early Intervention Part C, and Comprehensive Services Act about the availability of Medicaid waivers and programs through which needed services can be obtained. In particular, outreach efforts should convey that individuals with ASDs may be eligible for the Elderly or Disabled with Consumer Direction waiver, and that Medicaid and waiver recipients under age 21 can receive a comprehensive array of medically necessary services through the Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment program. The department should present a detailed plan outlining its proposed outreach efforts to the Joint Commission on Health Care no later than November 30, 2009.*

The attached plan, organized as a timeline of activities, presents DMAS' ongoing and planned effort to provide additional outreach regarding the availability of services relevant to recipients with ASDs. This document is intended to fulfill the JLARC Recommendation 4 (above). The DMAS approach is to utilize existing outreach vehicles for the Medicaid/FAMIS programs with added emphasis on services related to autism.

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November 16, 2009
Page Two

Please let me know if you have any questions or comments regarding this outreach plan. As always, DMAS remains committed to working with the General Assembly and its agencies, as well as the other stakeholders, in better meeting the needs of Medicaid recipients generally, and those with autism specifically.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Finnerty', written over a circular stamp or seal.

Patrick W. Finnerty

cc: The Honorable Marilyn B. Tavenner, Secretary of Health and Human Resources
James S. Reinhard, M.D., Commissioner, Department of Behavioral Health and
Developmental Services

Attachment

PWF/sf

Medicaid Autism Services Outreach Plan: Timeline of Agency Activities to Increase Knowledge of Existing Services to Recipients with ASDs

June 2009

- Information on ASDs and services available through Medicaid has been included into annual materials on preadmission screening for community (LDSS and VDH) and hospital preadmission screeners
- Training for service facilitators at routine monthly meetings includes information on the Medicaid services available for persons with ASDs
- Daily contact with providers and individual Medicaid recipients provides, when appropriate, information related to autism services
- Availability of autism services has been included in written material distributed at professional meetings

July 2009

- Presentations at conferences and meetings in relation to the waivers includes information on autism services

September/October 2009

- Information on ASD services was distributed in the “Case Manager’s Communiqué”
- EPSDT training material has been modified to highlight information on ASDs and available services

November 2009

- DMAS will meet with Autism Specialist at DBHDS to discuss how the two agencies can interface with activities concerning individuals with ASDs
- Training will be provided to the Mentors group regarding autism services that are available through the EPSDT benefit
- Autism will be highlighted on the IFDDS Waiver section of the LTC DMAS web page

December 2009

- Staff from DMAS will attend the Governor’s Conference on Children’s Services Transformation. While ASDs and available services are not specifically on the agenda, DMAS staff will provide this information.

January 2010

- DMAS will update the “Staying Healthy” section of the FAMIS website and the Maternal & Child Health website pages for EPSDT to include appropriate links to DBHDS’ website and other resources for individuals with ASDs
- DMAS and DBHDS are working together to determine if the current Early Intervention service structure needs to be adjusted to fit the needs of children with ASDs
- DMAS will revise the FAMIS and Medicaid handbooks to include covered services for individuals with ASDs
- DMAS will request the Autism Specialist at DBHDS to present to our Managed Care Organization (MCO) workgroup regarding DBHDS’ efforts for individuals with ASDs. Since all children with special health care needs in MCOs have case managers, this information should be very helpful to the MCOs

March 2010

- DMAS will include information in the next revision of the EPSDT newsletters to provide ASD resources to parents
- DMAS will place links to resources developed by DBHDS on the DMAS website
- DMAS will request the Autism Specialist at DBHDS to present to the Children’s Health Insurance Program Advisory Committee (CHIPAC) regarding DBHDS’ efforts for individuals with ASDs. CHIPAC membership includes many community, state and private partners such as:
 - the Joint Commission on Health Care
 - Virginia Health Care Foundation
 - Virginia Poverty Law Center
 - Virginia Hospital & Healthcare Association
 - Virginia Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
 - Virginia Pediatric Society Virginia; Community Healthcare Association
 - Dominion Power
 - Virginia Association of Health Plans
 - March of Dimes
 - VCU Health System
 - Various state agencies
- DMAS will work with DOE to develop ASD fact sheet for schools